



Washington State
Department of Transportation

Aviation Division News

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John Sibold, Aviation Division Director

Douglas B. MacDonald, Secretary of Transportation

Protecting Washington Airports Requires Choices

John Sibold, WSDOT Director of Aviation, needs your help. We are within a few years of losing a number of our airports, negatively impacting communities and aviators alike. As we approach the centennial of flight, general aviation in Washington finds itself at a critical juncture, a crossroad that may change the course of Washington's network of airports. The condition of airport pavement across the state is rapidly shifting downward, and the number of airports needing runway reconstruction is growing at an accelerated rate.

Each year ticks by without the resources to protect airports and repair costs continue to escalate. Our goal of preserving our aviation freedoms is eroding as our pavement crumbles. One way or another, the fate of these general aviation airports lies in the hands of aviators in Washington State.

Airports Reach Senior Status

The average age of airports in Washington is 55 years. Many were built to support military functions and quickly evolved into critical civilian centers that generate jobs and strengthen our economy. Yearly, general aviation airports generate 7,600 jobs, \$140 million in wages, and nearly \$500 million in total sales output. Washington's system of airports is made up of 129 public use airports, half of which are eligible for federal funds. Historically, the Federal Aviation Administration provide funds to less than half those airports leaving over 90 airports depending on WSDOT grants to survive.

Pavement Does Not Last a Lifetime

Runways and taxiways have a fairly long shelf life. If they were built with a sturdy base, concrete and avoided extreme weather conditions, chances are at the age of 55, they are in pretty good shape. If the runway foundation has been weakened over time, made of asphalt and freezes and thaws with the seasons, as is the case with many eastern Washington airports, the need for reconstruction is likely looming in the near future.

Runways are scored with a scale of 100 and reconstruction is inevitable when the score is between 40 and 50. The average score for Washington airports is 66.

Did you know?

General aviation generates 7,600 jobs and \$500 million every year.

Did you know?

It costs over \$10 million a year to maintain our state general aviation runways.

Did you know?

Aviation fees generate \$1 million a year for runway repairs, leaving an enormous gap in funding.

Did you know?

Over 95% of aviation users are exempt under state law from paying user fees for airport preservation.

Did you know?

Only one third of Washington's pilots and only half of aircraft owners pay registration fees and the remaining are remiss. This directly affects airport preservation efforts.

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Accomplishments of 2002

In June 2002, the new offices of the Aviation Division opened in Arlington. The move from Boeing Field after 30 years was a major step in its efforts to strengthen services to the 129 public use airports and 24,000 pilots across the state. As the state's fastest growing region of general aviation activity, the new location in Snohomish County improved outreach and service to customers. While the departure from King County International Airport/Boeing Field left some constituents nervous, the Aviation Division has garnered strong customer support with key program improvements.



Communication and Customer Service

The key priorities for the Aviation Division are improving communication and customer service. These areas were identified as critical components in the recent JLARC report which assessed the benefits of keeping the division within WSDOT or creating a separate agency.

- The Aviation Advisory Committee was recently formed to improve communication with customers. Committee membership reflects the broad spectrum of aviation stakeholders and is led by Aviation Division Director John Sibold.
- Working with the newly appointed aviation grant manager, Stan Allison, a taskforce including airport sponsor representatives, airport managers, local officials, and pilot volunteers convened to establish small airport construction standards, grant eligibility criteria, and award priorities. Adoption of good business practice policies closed the door on past concerns about favoritism and improper influence within the program.
- The division disposed of three UH-1H helicopters and one OV-10D military reconnaissance plane. None was operational or airworthy and a role within the division no longer existed.
- The division recently introduced online pilot, aircraft, and mechanic registration to improve customer convenience and processing costs. The new approach consolidates the three registration programs and will alleviate customer confusion, improve service, and saves money.

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Pavement engineers assessed the airports and here is what they found:

Threatened Airports			
<i>Airport</i>	<i>2006 PCI</i>	<i>Jobs</i>	<i>Total Sales Output</i>
Lind	10	16	\$874,697
Quincy	11	10	\$591,579
Ilwaco	7	14	\$899,845
Cle Elum	22	11	\$734,027
Sekiu	25	12	\$708,268
Rosalia	34	9	\$612,339
Toledo	34	76	\$4,967,287
Southbend	35	8	\$519,004

At Risk Airports
Electric City
Twisp
Westport
Warden
Othello
Sunnyside

What Happens to Our Way of Life?

Most aviation activity in Washington occurs in urban areas and most urban general aviation airports receive federal grant support. However, most general aviation airports are located in rural communities and most rural airports use WSDOT grants to survive. Rural airports are part of basic transportation for access to specialized services, especially for critical medical services. Transport of blood, pharmaceuticals, donated tissue and organs, cancelled bank checks are key commercial

Why Does it Matter to You?

The freedom of flying is assured with a system of small and large airports. Urban general aviation airports should not solely comprise the airport system in Washington. They are typically more expensive to operate from, more complex airspace, greater security restrictions, and in many cases, have no room for growth.

Jobs and economic hope in rural Washington are at stake with the survivability of these airports.

Did you know?

Today, 8 airports have failing primary runways. In 2009, 14 airports will be at a point of critical failure.

Did you know?

Most general aviation airports were built to protect our nation.

Did you know?

Runways are scored with a scale of 100 and reconstruction is inevitable when the score is between 40 and 50. The average score for Washington airports is 66.

Did you know?

Losing small general aviation airports leads to a loss of affordable aviation.

Director Sibold Provides Legislature With Aviation Revenue Overview

WSDOT Aviation Director John Sibold briefed the Washington State Senate Tax Exempt Committee an overview of aviation revenue in Washington which funds the airport grant and preservation programs. The aviation program is one of 17 programs in WSDOT and represents less than 1 percent of the department's budget. WSDOT's Aviation Division is funded by aviation related taxes and fees. The major funding source is the tax on aircraft fuel. Pilot and aircraft registration fees are \$8 and the annual aircraft excise tax is based on the size of the aircraft. The Aeronautics Account is a special revenue source and motor vehicle funds cannot support aviation project, per law.

Due to the effects of September 11th and the variable fuel tax rate for aviation fuel, WSDOT projects a reduction of airport preservation funds by \$800,000 for the 2003-2005 biennium. The 2001-2003 biennium provided nearly \$2 million in state grants to airports. The reduction in available funds will reduce WSDOT's ability to issue preservation grants to airports. Director John Sibold has directed staff to pursue federal funding options to help fill the \$800,000 gap in funds. "I am concerned by this funding trend," said Sibold. "Over \$10 million is needed annually just to maintain today's pavement condition across the state, and we only see \$3 million (state and federal funds combined) available."

FAA Funding Program for Small Airports Expanded

Congress has agreed to use the updated National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) for federal fiscal year 2003 funding, expanding the number of general aviation airports to receive money. More pavement maintenance projects will be eligible for FAA funding through the non-primary entitlement program. Of the 129 public use airports in Washington, over half are airports contained in the NPIAS and are eligible to receive federal money. While the FAA has not had many dollars available for smaller general aviation airports in the past, WSDOT recognizes how important the federal monies are to general aviation. WSDOT encourages all NPIAS airports eligible to receive the non-primary entitlement funding to utilize the funding opportunity.

"Leveraging WSDOT grants with the new federal dollars will leave more state grants for airports who cannot receive federal monies," said Stan Allison, WSDOT Aviation Operations Manager.

Airport Aid Grants Issued in 2002

WSDOT issued 16 grants to cities, counties, and ports for airport preservation projects totaling \$263,588 in 2002. The airport aid grants issued for 2001-2002 totaled \$2,033,722. The 16 airports were Vashon Municipal, Quincy Municipal, Rosalia Municipal, Davenport Municipal, Darrington Municipal, Tacoma Narrows, Desert Aire, Jefferson County Airport, Bowers Field, Kelso-Longview, Lopez, Moses Lake Municipal, Chelan, Okanogan Regional, Willapa Harbor, and Strom Field.

Legislature Seeks Information on Aircraft Fuel Exemptions

Washington State assesses a fuel tax on aviation fuel at a rate of 3 percent of weighted average price per gallon. The tax has a floor of 5¢ and the current rate is 7¢ per gallon. While the greatest revenue source for airport preservation projects is an aviation fuel tax, over 90 percent of the users are exempt from paying the tax. The following use is exempt from paying the aviation fuel tax, per 82.42.025 RCW: commercial use, farm use, research, testing, and training.

“Many of the exempt companies use Washington’s airports, hangar, and maintain their aircraft here but do not pay for the preservation of the airport. Right now, general aviation, particularly the recreational pilot with a single engine aircraft who is not exempt, pays the full cost of preserving system,” John Sibold, WSDOT Aviation Director, said while testifying before the Washington State Senate Tax Exempt Subcommittee.

“General aviation cannot carry the burden alone and unfortunately, we do not have enough revenue coming in to preserve Washington’s system of airports,” said Sibold. “No action is an action, and pavement crumbles over time. The aviation community needs to work together to keep the system together. The ability for status quo no longer exists. In the next 10 years we will see numerous pavement failures if we do not do something.”

WSDOT Pursues Airport Cameras to Provide Pilots Real Time Weather Views

WSDOT is working with the University of Washington and WSDOT Northwest Region to install cameras at selected airports to offer real-time weather views. The airport program expands the well-used WSDOT cameras for automobile travel over the Cascade Mountains and Puget Sound Region. WSDOT hopes to have the first real-time camera views available online by spring 2003.

Airport Land Use Planning in Full Swing

WSDOT has a major role in protecting airports from encroachment. WSDOT is working with city and county governments and airports to implement the new state land use regulations. All cities, counties, or towns in Washington State are required to review and update their comprehensive plans and development regulations to ensure compliance with new provisions of the Growth Management Act. During 2002, the Washington State Legislature extended the time for compliance.

The first updates are required to be completed by the following dates:

- December 1, 2004 – Clallam, Clark, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom
- December 1, 2005 – Cowlitz, Island, Lewis, Manson, San Juan, Skagit, and Skamania
- December 1, 2006 – Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas, Spokane, and Yakima
- December 1, 2007 – Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grays Harbor, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, and Whitman

Current Comprehensive Plan Update Efforts

WSDOT presented the Airport Land Use Compatibility Program to the Senate Transportation Committee. This proactive program is in its sixth year and over 72 airports are now protected through comprehensive plan policies and development regulations. The following are communities involved in comprehensive plan or development regulation updates.

City of Auburn: Comprehensive plan update – Auburn Municipal.

City of Yakima: Mediation with the GMA Hearings Board to resolve several issues on a 2001 comp plan amendment and 2002 development regulations on 600 acres NW of Yakima Air Terminal.

Pierce County/Thun Field: Proposed South Hill Community Plan and implementing zoning regulations.

Pierce County/Tacoma Narrows Airport: Gig Harbor Community Plan and implementing zoning regulations.

Chelan Municipal Airport: City of Chelan proposed amendments to comprehensive plan.

Kenmore Air Harbor: City of Kenmore Downtown Subarea Plan proposed implementing zoning regulations.

Arlington Airport: City of Marysville proposed Smokey Point Subarea Plan and implementing zoning regulations.

Bellingham International Airport: Whatcom County Essential Public Facilities Policy.

Jim Scott Welcomed to WSDOT as Airport Maintenance Supervisor

With experience flying hundreds of aircraft from hot air balloons to jet planes, Jim Scott joined the WSDOT team as Airport Maintenance Supervisor. This critical position sets an improved course for the 16 state-operated airports as recreational destinations, opening beautiful scenic locations to the aviation community. Jim will focus on strengthening the relationships between WSDOT and the federal agencies the state leases eight of the airports from, including Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, and National Park Service. “The state airports go well beyond helping pilots in emergency situations. They are destinations where families can picnic, camp or even better, offer ideal fishing spots,” said Scott. “We want to enhance our airports with improved visitor services like picnic tables, shelters and transportation to neighboring communities.” Scott recently kicked off the Adopt-an-Airport program as well.

In his spare time, Scott is the manager of the NW EAA Fly-In in Arlington and grew up on an airport. “I want my own family, and my aviation family to have the same opportunities in aviation that were available to me as a child,” said Scott.

January Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic Well Attended

Over 135 flight instructors attended the Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic held in Tacoma, Washington. The clinic covered critical topics such as collision avoidance, human factors, instructor responsibilities, safety, and the fundamentals of instruction. The clinics, held four times a year, are funded through the WSDOT registration program.

Online Registration Now a Reality

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Division is now offering online registration for pilots and aircraft owners. The new program will allow pilots and aircraft owners to pay state registration fees online with a credit card through a secured Bank of America site.

The new online registration program enables WSDOT to expand its customer service offerings with e-mail alerts, pilot guide updates, monthly news updates, current training schedules, and a new state airport map. Pilots and aircraft owners are required by state law to register with WSDOT. Historically, aviators registered by mail and in person. "We recognized just how much aviators are using the Internet for online ground school, aviation news and purchasing equipment," said Nisha Hanchinamani, WSDOT Aviation Registration Manager.

While registering online is convenient and customer friendly, it is cost effective. "In these times of tight resources and soaring airport

needs, we know aviators will appreciate that the state is improving processing costs and saving money," said Director John Sibold.

Growing Pains for Online Registration

Online registration allows customers to log on by using their e-mail address and password as their ID. "Since we do

letters which they can change to their e-mail address," said Hanchinamani. As well, a secured site through Bank of America enables convenient credit card use for registration.

Online registration is available for both pilot and aircraft registration by going to WSDOT Aviation's web site at **www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation** and clicking on pilot or aircraft registration.

Registration fees pay for the state's air search and rescue operations, aviation educational programs, and Washington state-operated airport maintenance. WSDOT's education program is designed to increase aviation safety, enhance pilot knowledge, and offer refresher clinics to keep certifications current for registered pilots, aircraft owners, and mechanics.

Pilots and aircraft owners who prefer to renew by mail may continue to do so by downloading the registration forms from the

WSDOT Aviation web site and mailing the completed form and check for \$8 to WSDOT Aviation, PO Box 3367, Arlington, WA 98223.



not have e-mail addresses for all our customers, aviators registered in 2002 will receive an assigned user ID and password in their registration renewal

Early Online Registration Returns Impressive

Washington state's pilots and aircraft owners are utilizing the WSDOT online registration program. In the first three days, the new online service collected over \$25,000. The online service reduces administration costs and processing time. "Since I arrived nearly a year ago, I committed to improving customer service and that is what we are doing. I found that many people did not know state registration was required and we confused aviators by not consolidating our pilot and aircraft registration," said Sibold.

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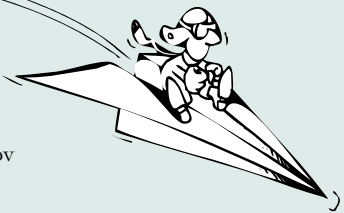
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If You Have Something to Say ... We are Listening

E-mail your thoughts and ideas on how we can preserve Washington's aviation system, ways to improve our communication, and your needs for customer service to WSDOT at:

avioutc@wsdot.wa.gov

Let Us See Your Pretty Face

FAR 61.3(a)(2) now requires all pilots to carry photo identification when exercising the privileges of their pilot certificates. And, FAR 61.3(l)(4) now adds authorized representatives of the Transportation Security Administration to the list of persons who can require pilots to present photo ID and any airman certificate, medical certificate, authorization, or license required by Part 61. Any ONE of the following are considered acceptable forms of photo ID: A valid driver's license issued by a US state, the District of Columbia, or a US territory or possession; a valid identification card issued by the Federal government, a state, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States; a US Armed Forces identification card; credentials that authorize access to airport secure areas; a official passport; any other identification acceptable to the FAA.

Airport Operations Team on the Road in December

Stan Allison and Jim Scott visited and swapped stories with airports across the state, including the following:

Lynden Municipal Airport
Okanogan Municipal
Odessa Municipal
Bandera State
Lake Wenatchee State
Lower Monumental State

Wilbur Municipal
Anderson Field
Rosalia Municipal
Easton State
Lower Granite State
Desert Aire Municipal

Omak Municipal
Electric City Airport
Rogersburg State
Skykomish State
Little Goose State

WSDOT Sponsors the Northwest Aviation Conference & Trade Show Annual Banquet

WSDOT will host the annual banquet at the Northwest Aviation Conference and Trade Show at the Western Washington Fairgrounds in Puyallup, Washington. John Sibold, WSDOT Aviation Director, will present the Aviation Hall of Fame Awards to the 2003 recipients as well as the Airport of the Year award, Airport Manager of the Year award, and Airport Volunteer award. "We are increasing our participation at the trade show and will have several computers set up to help pilots and aircraft owners register at the event. We'll also have a few chairs available for customers to rest their feet, a hot commodity at the show," said Sibold.

